

# Suggestions for Implementing Recess Guidance for Schools Based on Air Quality

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## Where can you find the daily PM2.5 levels?

- » To check the current PM2.5 levels, visit [www.airquality.utah.gov](http://www.airquality.utah.gov) and click on “current conditions” for PM2.5 levels for Cache, Salt Lake / Davis, Utah and Weber counties.
- » DEQ also has this information via a listserv that is emailed to you when unhealthy air pollution levels are expected. To subscribe, send an e-mail to [Subscribe-Choose\\_Clean\\_Air@list.utah.gov](mailto:Subscribe-Choose_Clean_Air@list.utah.gov).

## When should you check the PM2.5 levels?

- » It is suggested you check the PM2.5 levels once daily in the morning.

## Who should check the PM2.5 levels?

- » Each school district will vary, but it is suggested that a protocol be in place to make the decision. Superintendents can make the decision for the entire district or a principal on a school-by-school basis. Other personnel, such as Human Resource Specialists or Risk Managers, may also be appropriate staff for making decisions.

## What should you do if the PM2.5 level is $35.5 \text{ ug/m}^3$ - $55.4 \text{ ug/m}^3$ ?

- » When the PM2.5 level is between  $35.5 \text{ ug/m}^3$  -  $55.4 \text{ ug/m}^3$ , the guidance suggests that students previously identified by a parent as being “sensitive” avoid outdoor physical activity. These students may already have a health plan in place indicating their needs. To accommodate “sensitive” students indoors, schools should designate a single room, arrange for PTA representatives/volunteers to supervise, or make other arrangements.

## What should you do if the PM2.5 level is $55.5 \text{ ug/m}^3$ - $90 \text{ ug/m}^3$ ?

- » When the PM2.5 level is between  $55.5 \text{ ug/m}^3$  -  $90 \text{ ug/m}^3$ , the guidance suggests that “sensitive” students and students experiencing respiratory symptoms avoid outdoor physical activity. Symptoms that may indicate a student should stay indoors include coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness. The same arrangements designated above could be used.

## How are “sensitive” students identified?

- » Parents, with the advice of their health care provider, should inform their school if they believe their child is part of a “sensitive” group who should have limited outdoor physical activity when the air quality is poor. Visit [www.health.utah.gov/asthma](http://www.health.utah.gov/asthma) for a sample letter for parents.

## What should you do if the PM2.5 level is above $90 \text{ ug/m}^3$ ?

- » When the PM2.5 level is higher than  $90 \text{ ug/m}^3$ , the guidance suggests outdoor physical activity be avoided for all students. Schools might opt to adapt protocols for inclement weather days for such occasions.

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How many days will poor air quality affect all students?

- » Keeping all students indoors does not happen very often. For example, during the winter of 2006-07, there were only 4 days at Hawthorne Elementary in Salt Lake City during which PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels were above 90 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. In Ogden there were only 2 days during which PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels were above 90 ug/m<sup>3</sup>.

How can you promote physical activity for students who stay indoors?

- » It is important that students continue to get physical activity on worsening air quality days. North Carolina University has produced a booklet of energizer activities that can be done in the space of a classroom. The booklet can be downloaded at [www.ncpe4me.com/energizers.html](http://www.ncpe4me.com/energizers.html).

What should you do if air quality is not an issue for your school district?

- » Not all school districts are affected by air quality. Generally, only those with access to results of air monitoring stations in their areas are able to apply the guidance. These areas include Cache, Davis, Salt Lake, Utah and Weber counties.
- » For school districts in which the guidance may not apply, administrators can contact their local health department to adapt the guidance to meet their needs.

For more information visit the Utah Department of Health Asthma Program at [www.health.utah.gov/asthma](http://www.health.utah.gov/asthma).